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1335-CRIWU

27 July 1951

SUBJECT: BCFIEND Notes for Discussion with Ascham

TO : Chief, BCFHYTHM
Washington, D. C.

INFO: Chief, BCFHYTHM

ATTN :

1. During the past few days Ascham has been in Rome, and word has reached me that in his discussions with some fears have been expressed as to the worthwhileness of the BCFIEND operation under present policy.

2. I had hoped to see Ascham to present the BCFIEND activity from my position in Rome, but since that was not possible I have sent him the rough notes which I prepared for discussion. A copy of these notes is attached.

APPROVED:

Attach: 1 ()

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NOTES FOR DISCUSSION WITH MR. CROAN

The writer is seriously disturbed by the attitude held toward BSEFEND in some Rome quarters. The writer feels that evidence, both pro and con, needs to be weighed very carefully in evaluating the results of this endeavor.

On the debit side, it is true that BSEFEND activities are frequently the cause of some concern for those persons involved in broader fields of operation. It must also be admitted that policy, or lack of policy, particularly toward neighboring powers, sometimes raises doubts in the minds of these same people - especially so when it appears that a specific BSEFEND activity might conceivably offend one of these powers.

This individual feels that to show undue concern over such matters is to overlook the true accomplishments of the BSEFEND activity - for the very success of the operation is reflected in the seriousness of and the frequency with which we are called upon to deal with the troublesome matters. Let us examine and evaluate the worth of some such happenings:

a. The formation of a Yugoslav-Albanian Committee in Exile by Tito. It now seems apparent that Tito's protest to us that the dropping of propaganda material on Albania might ferment conflict in the Balkans was nothing more than a smokescreen to hide his own operations in Albania. Less than thirty days after asking us to cease and desist Tito formed his committee, and less than thirty days after its formation the first Yugoslav leaflets were dropped on Albania. Less than sixty days after the committee's formation fifteen agents were dropped into Albania at high noon and killed seven Albanian soldiers in an ensuing fight. On the face of the evidence now at hand - from the things said by Tito's radio and press - it is apparent that Tito viewed the success of HTNEIGH with alarm.

b. The efforts of certain Albanian forces not now included in the National Committee for Free Albania structure to broaden that body to include their forces. Two years ago when the National Committee for Free Albania was formed certain Albanian

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groups and individuals in exile turned a deaf ear toward spokesmen who approached them with an invitation to join the NCFA. Today these same groups and individuals are making a determined effort to make a belated entry into the Committee. It is only too apparent that these groups and individuals are concerned over the success of NCFA operations.

c. Increased resistance to the Communist regime within Albania and the constantly rising number of defections from the country. During the period 16 June-19 July 112 Albanians crossed the border from Albania to Greece alone. Of this total 42 persons were from the military.

d. Communist assassination team sent to Rome to liquidate NCFA members. Last week a four-man assassination team arrived in Rome for the purpose of doing away with the prominent leaders of the NCFA headquartered in Rome. If proof were needed to judge the success of NCFA, this latest move by the opposition can surely be viewed as conclusive evidence.

These are but a few of the happenings in the DEFIEND operation. Unfortunately, three of them are upsetting to members of our organization in certain Rome quarters.

It is only natural that fear of upsetting the Tito relationship should be of some concern; it must also be upsetting in some quarters when rumors of strife within the NCFA over the question of broadening the Committee are so prevalent. But the writer views these matters in a different light.

To sit back and allow Tito to berate the NCFA is to encourage the loss of respect and ultimately the cause for which DEFIEND fights. Those of us concerned directly with DEFIEND have always advocated a "go slow" policy in dealing with the Tito activity, and it always was, and is, intended only to deal with matters as Tito exposes his moves.

A similar view is taken with respect to the broadening of NCFA to include other Albanians. When the intents of these individuals and groups are known, when their contribution to the overall DEFIEND cause can be accurately determined and they themselves can be integrated harmoniously into the NCFA, then we shall move. Until that time arrives we should not be unduly alarmed about rumors of discord. Instead, we might well view such rumors with satisfaction because they indicate that to the Albanians themselves - the people who are directly concerned - DEFIEND operations are too successful to be ignored.

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// It is because of these and numerous other signs of success that the writer urges careful consideration be given to any decision aimed toward the curtailment of BSEFEND activities....to give up the struggle in Albania is to give up the Balkans. Probably no other country in Europe is so coveted by so many. Certainly no Communist satellite has more Balkan eyes focused upon it and, in all probability, the part we are playing as a nation in Albania's fight for freedom is better known to these designing neighbors than any similar activity being conducted in Southeastern Europe.

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